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(54) Title: P53 BINDING PROTEIN-RELATED PROTEIN IN CARDIOMYOPATHY

(57) Abstract: The present invention is directed to a mouse model of dilated cardiomyopathy in which animals are deficient in the expression of a gene encoding a p53 binding protein-related protein (PRP). The invention also encompasses the mouse PRP gene and protein themselves as well as counterparts found in the human. The various genes and proteins can be used in making transgenic animals and in assays designed to determine the likelihood of an individual developing cardiomyopathy.

p53 Binding Protein-Related Protein in Cardiomyopathy

Cross Reference to Related Application

The present application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application no. 60/299,160, filed on June 20, 2001.

Field of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a mouse model of dilated cardiomyopathy. It also includes genes and proteins whose underexpression contributes to disease development and a variety of compositions and methods in which these genes and proteins are used.

Background of the Invention

Congestive heart failure affects over 4 million people in the United States and is the most common cause of hospitalization for patients over the age of 65. A leading cause of congestive heart failure is dilated cardiomyopathy. This condition is characterized by the progressive expansion of the heart muscle and an accompanying inability to maintain adequate blood flow. Patients typically complain of fatigue, shortness of breath and chest pain. There is presently no cure for this condition and up to 50% of patients die or require a heart transplant within 5 years of diagnosis.

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A model of dilated cardiomyopathy has been generated in mice by mutating CREB, a gene involved in regulating the growth and development of cardiac muscle (www.UCHospitals.edu/news/IDC.mouse.html). This model should provide a means for scientists to study disease progression and to test various therapeutic approaches. The present invention is based upon the discovery that mutations in a different gene are also involved in the development of dilated cardiomyopathy and that mice that underexpress this gene provide a distinct model of the disease. Previous studies have described a similar gene, the relA-associated inhibitor (RAI), gene in yeast and humans (Yang, *et al.*, *J. Biol. Chem.* 274:15662-15670 (1999); WO 0032628). Because the newly identified gene encodes a protein that is homologous to p53 binding protein 2, it has been designated as the "p53 binding protein-related protein" (PRP) gene.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention is based upon the discovery that mice with a spontaneous mutation in their PRP gene develop dilated cardiomyopathy. It encompasses the mouse PRP gene and protein, as well as transgenic animals that underexpress wild type protein and which, as a result, develop cardiomyopathy. In addition, the invention includes an PRP gene from humans that is distinct from similar genes that have been previously reported. By measuring the level at which this gene is expressed, an assay can be developed for assessing the likelihood of a person developing dilated cardiomyopathy.

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A. Mouse PRP Gene and Protein

In its first aspect, the invention is directed to a substantially purified mouse PRP protein which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1. As used herein, the term "substantially purified" refers to a protein or polynucleotide that has been separated from other accompanying biological components and which typically comprises at least 85% of a sample, with greater percentages being preferred. Many means are available for assessing the purity of a protein or nucleic acid within a sample, including analysis by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, chromatography and analytical centrifugation.

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The invention is also directed to a process for producing an antibody that binds preferentially to the mouse PRP protein described above. "Preferential binding" refers to antibodies that have at least a 100-fold greater affinity for PRP than for any other protein normally found in the mouse. Preferably, such antibodies also have a 100-fold greater affinity for mouse PRP than for similar proteins derived from other species. The invention encompasses a process for producing antibodies by administering purified mouse PRP as defined by SEQ ID NO:1 to an animal capable of antibody production. The protein should be administered at a dosage sufficient to induce antibody formation in the animal.

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In another aspect, the invention is directed to a substantially pure polynucleotide encoding the mouse PRP as discussed above, to expression vectors in which such polynucleotides are operably linked to a promoter, and to host cells transformed with such vectors. The term "operably linked" refers to genetic elements that are joined in a manner that enables them to carry out their normal functions. For example, a gene is operably linked to a promoter when its transcription is under the control of the promoter and the transcript

produced is correctly translated into the protein normally encoded by the gene. The term "host cell" encompasses essentially any type of cell capable of expressing the PRP gene. In a preferred embodiment, the polynucleotide has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

5 **B. DNA Construct for Homologous Recombination**

The invention also includes a DNA construct suitable for homologous recombination and that can be used in the development of transgenic animals deficient in the production of normal, *i.e.*, wild type, PRP. The construct must contain a targeting segment which has the nucleotide sequence of the endogenous PRP gene, a portion of which is interrupted or 10 replaced with a marker sequence not normally present. Upon introduction into a host cell, the targeting segment must be capable of integrating into the genome at the site of the endogenous gene. When this occurs, a mutant PRP allele is produced that is incapable of synthesizing fully functional protein.

15 There are several features of the DNA construct described above which deserve further comment. First, the essential feature of the targeting segment is the ability to undergo homologous recombination at the PRP gene locus. The marker sequence which is used to interrupt or replace a portion of the targeting segment must result in a recombinant PRP sequence that has been sufficiently disrupted to result in a protein that is no longer fully 20 functional. For example, the marker may disrupt the normal reading frame of the gene. Preferably, the marker sequence can be used in helping to select cells that have undergone homologous recombination. For example, the neomycin resistance gene may be used as a marker.

25 The marker nucleotide sequence is said to "interrupt" the PRP gene in instances where all of the original PRP nucleotides are still present but are separated by the marker sequence. Replacement occurs in situations where a portion of the original PRP sequence is deleted and the marker sequence takes its place. In addition to marker sequences, DNA constructs may also contain a "selection sequence" that can be used to distinguish between 30 cells in which recombination has occurred at the PRP locus and cells where recombination has occurred at other sites in the genome. The most preferred selection sequence comprises the HSV-thymidine kinase gene. The absence of a "fully functional" PRP gene will be

evidenced by the development of dilated cardiomyopathy in mice in which the deficiency is present.

Finally, it should be noted that DNA constructs may be made in which the targeting segment contains only a portion of the PRP gene provided that the portion is still capable of 5 integrating at the site of the endogenous PRP gene. Similarly, it is not absolutely necessary that the sequence of the targeting segment be exactly complementary to the endogenous gene sequence provided that sufficient complementarity is maintained to direct the construct to the proper genomic location.

10 C. Transgenic Animals

The present invention encompasses a method of producing a transgenic mouse having a phenotype characterized by progressive dilated cardiomyopathy. The first step in the method involves making a DNA construct according to the procedures set forth above. The construct is introduced into mouse embryonic stem (ES) cells for the purpose of integrating 15 the targeting fragment into the mouse genome at the PRP gene locus. Recombinant stem cells so produced are selected and then incorporated into mouse blastocysts to form chimeric embryos. These are implanted into pseudopregnant mice and allowed to develop into viable offspring. The offspring are then screened to identify heterozygous mice containing a mutant PRP gene. Finally, these mice are interbred to develop homozygous transgenic mice having 20 the desired phenotype.

In preparing the DNA construct for use as described above, it is preferred that the marker sequence be comprised of the neomycin resistance gene and that the construct further contain the HSV-thymidine kinase gene.

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In addition to the method above, the invention encompasses mice having a phenotype characterized by the development of progressive dilated cardiomyopathy and in which the mice express significantly less wild type PRP than a normal mouse of the same species. The deficiency in PRP production may be either due to less protein being made or to the 30 production of protein that is functionally defective.

D. Human PRP Gene and Protein

In another aspect, the invention is directed to a substantially purified human PRP protein that is structurally distinct from similar proteins described in the art and which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:3. Also included are substantially purified polynucleotides encoding the protein and expression vectors in which the polynucleotides are operably linked to a promoter. A preferred polynucleotide sequence is that of SEQ ID NO:4. Recombinant human PRP may be obtained by transforming an appropriate host cell with the expression vector.

Antibodies to purified human PRP can be developed and used in assays for quantitating the amount of PRP being produced. In this respect, the invention includes a method of determining the likelihood of a human subject developing dilated cardiomyopathy by obtaining a "test" sample of cells from the patient, determining the amount of PRP protein or mRNA present in the cells and comparing this amount with that determined for a similar "control" sample obtained from individuals known to be free of disease or from the general population. If the test sample has an amount of PRP that is significantly lower than the control sample, it may be concluded that the patient being tested has a higher than normal likelihood of developing dilated cardiomyopathy. Results may be analyzed using standard statistical methods to determine whether observed differences between test and control samples are significant. In cases where mRNA levels are measured, standard blotting techniques may be used in conjunction with nucleic acid probes that hybridize specifically to the PRP transcript.

Description of Sequences

- SEQ ID NO:1: The mouse PRP protein sequence.
SEQ ID NO:2: The full length DNA coding sequence for mouse PRP.
SEQ ID NO:3: The human PRP protein sequence.
SEQ ID NO:4: DNA corresponding to the full length mRNA of human PRP.

30 Detailed Description of the Invention

Deficiencies in cellular PRP levels, either due to low production or to the making of a protein that lacks full activity, leads to the development of progressive dilated cardiomyopathy. The PRP gene from the mouse may be used to produce transgenic animals

that serve as a model for studying this disease and for testing therapies. In addition, PRP levels in humans may be assayed to determine the likelihood of an individual developing this condition.

5 **A. Mouse and Human PRP Genes and Proteins**

Any tissue or cellular source which expresses the human or mouse PRP gene (e.g., heart tissue or skin) may be used for purification. Many methods are available for obtaining substantially pure DNA sequences and may be adapted for the isolation of PRP (see e.g., Sambrook, *et al.*, Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, 2nd Ed., Cold Spring Harbor Press (1989)). Alternatively, gene sequences may be synthesized using standard procedures or obtained in large amounts using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Primers suitable for performing PCR may be based upon the sequences provided herein in the Sequence Listing.

In order to express protein, the PRP gene structural sequence must be placed in a vector containing transcriptional and translational signals that are recognized by a host cell. Cloned PRP sequences should be inserted into an expression vector in an operable linkage, i.e. they should be positioned so as to be under the control of regulatory sequences found in the vector and in such a manner that mRNA is produced which is correctly translated into the PRP amino acid sequence.

20 Expression of a protein in different hosts may result in different post-translational modifications that can, potentially, alter the properties of the protein. Preferably, nucleic acid encoding PRP is expressed in eukaryotic cells, especially mammalian cells. These cells provide post-translational modifications which *inter alia* aid in the correct folding of the protein. Mammalian cells that may be used include, without limitation, NIH-3T3 cells, CHO cells, HeLa cells, LM(tk⁻) cells, etc. Vectors suitable for each of these cell types are well known in the art (see e.g., Sambrook, *et al. supra*). Preferred eukaryotic promoters include that of the mouse metallothionein I gene, the TK promoter of herpes virus; the SV 40 early promoter, and the CMV early promoter. Examples of suitable prokaryotic promoters include those capable of recognizing T4 polymerases, the P_R and P_L promoters of bacteriophage lambda, and the Trp, recA, heat shock and LacZ promoters of *E. coli*. Expression vectors may be introduced into host cells by methods such as calcium phosphate precipitation, microinjection, electroporation and viral transfer. Cells expressing recombinant polypeptide

can be selected using methods well known in the art. One simple method for confirming the presence of desired sequences is to perform PCR amplification as discussed above.

Recombinant protein may be purified using standard techniques such as filtration, precipitation, chromatography and electrophoresis. Purity can be assessed by performing electrophoresis in a polyacrylamide or agarose gel and visualizing proteins using standard staining techniques. The purified proteins may be used as controls in assays for determining the level of PRP produced in a cellular sample and for making antibodies that can be used in such assays. Polynucleotides can be used for recombinantly making protein and the DNA corresponding to the endogenous mouse PRP gene may be used in constructs for the production of transgenic animals.

B. Antibodies to PRP Proteins

The present invention includes antibodies that bind preferentially to PRP and to a process for producing such antibodies. The process involves injecting either the entire PRP protein into an appropriate animal or injecting short peptides from specific regions of the protein. Methods for making and detecting antibodies are well known to those of skill in the art as evidenced by standard reference works such as: Harlow, *et al. Antibodies, A Laboratory Manual*, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, N.Y. (1988); Klein, Immunology: The Science of Self-Nonself Discrimination (1982); and Campbell, "Monoclonal Antibody Technology, in: Laboratory Techniques in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (1984)).

The antibodies may be used to detect PRP in any of a variety of immunoassays. For example, antibodies may be used in radioimmunoassays or immunometric assays, also known as "two-site" or "sandwich" assays (see Chard, "An Introduction to Radioimmune Assay and Related Techniques," in: Laboratory Techniques in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, North Holland Publishing Co., N.Y. (1978)). In a typical immunometric assay, a quantity of unlabeled antibody is bound to a solid support that is insoluble in the fluid being tested, e.g., blood, lymph, cellular extracts, etc. After the initial binding of antigen to immobilized antibody, a quantity of detectably labeled second antibody (which may or may not be the same as the first) is added to permit detection and/or quantitation of bound antigen (see e.g., Kirkham, *et al.*, Radioimmune Assay Method, (1970)). Many variations of these types of assays are known in the art and may be employed in connection with the present invention.

Antibodies to PRP may also be used in purification procedures (see generally, Dean *et al.*, Affinity Chromatography, A Practical Approach, IRL Press (1986)). Typically, antibody is immobilized on a chromatographic matrix such as Sepharose 4B™. The matrix is then packed into a column and the preparation containing PRP is passed through under conditions that promote binding, e.g., under conditions of low salt. The column is then washed and bound protein is eluted using a buffer that promotes dissociation from antibody, e.g., buffer having an altered pH or salt concentration. The eluted protein may be transferred to a buffer of choice, e.g., by dialysis, and either stored or used directly.

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C. DNA Constructs for Homologous Recombination

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The DNA constructs of the invention are often referred to in the literature as "knockout" constructs because of their use in disrupting normally active genes. Typically, they contain a relatively long (>1 Kb) targeting segment that has a sequence highly homologous to an endogenous gene in a host cell and that is disrupted by a non-homologous marker sequence. The targeting segment used in constructs may be derived from either genomic or cDNA molecules by standard methods (see, e.g., Sambrook, *et al., supra*). For example, a portion of the PRP gene may be isolated using PCR amplification based upon its known sequence. Alternatively, the targeting segment in a construct may be made using chemical synthesis methods.

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In order to incorporate a marker sequence, the targeting segment can be digested with one or more restriction enzymes selected to cut at specific locations. Any location which produces a sufficient disruption of the PRP gene to result in the elimination of a functional gene product after homologous recombination will suffice. Thus, disruption may take place either within the structural sequence of PRP or at a regulatory element, e.g., the promoter of the gene.

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The marker sequence used in constructs will typically be an antibiotic resistance gene or other gene whose expression can be easily detected and which is not normally present in the host. The marker gene may be expressed in the host cell either as a result of its being operably linked to a promoter in the construct, or by coming under of the control of the native PRP gene promoter as a result of homologous recombination. In cases where it is part of the construct, the promoter should be selected based upon its having a high activity in the

particular host cell undergoing homologous recombination. A typical example of a promoter suitable for use in mouse cells is the promoter of the phosphoglycerate kinase gene. The most preferred gene for use as a marker is a neomycin resistance gene (Neo). Cells which have integrated Neo into their genome and which are expressing this gene are resistant to G418.

5 Thus, a simple means is provided for selecting recombinant cells. In addition to a promoter, the marker gene will typically have a polyA sequence attached to its 3' end.

In addition to having a marker gene for disrupting the PRP sequence and for identifying cells that have undergone homologous recombination, the constructs of the present invention will typically include a gene that can be used for distinguishing between 10 cells in which recombination has occurred at the PRP gene locus and cells in which recombination has occurred elsewhere in the genome. Preferably, this "selection sequence" will consist of the HSV-thymidine kinase gene under the control of an appropriate promoter. The combination of a marker sequence for selecting all cells that have undergone 15 homologous recombination and a selection sequence for distinguishing site specific integration from random integration has been termed "positive-negative selection" and details of both the procedure and the production of constructs appropriate for the procedure are well known in the art (see Capecchi, M., *TIG* 5:70 (1989); Mansour *et al.*, *Nature* 36:348 (1988); Thomas, *et al.*, *Cell* 51:503 (1987); and Doetschman, *et al.*, *Nature* 330:576 (1987)).

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The DNA construct for disruption of the PRP gene may be transfected directly into a host cell or it may first be placed in a vector for amplification prior to transfection. Preferred vectors are those that are rapidly amplified in bacterial cells such as the pBluescript II SK vector (Stratagene, San Diego Calif.) or pGEM 7 (Promega Corp., Madison, Wis.).

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D. Production of ES Cells Comprising DNA Constructs

ES cells suitable for transfection by the constructs described above can be selected based upon their ability to integrate into and become part of the germ line of a developing embryo. Any ES cell line that has this characteristic may be used, e.g., the murine cell line 30 D3 (ATCC, 12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Md, Catalog No. CRL1934). After appropriate host cells have been chosen, they are cultured and prepared for DNA insertion using methods known in the art (see, e.g., Robertson in: Teratocarcinomas and Embryonic Stem Cells: A Practical Approach, E.J. Robertson, Ed., IRL Press, Washington, DC (1987); Bradley, *et al.*,

Curr. Topics in Devel. Biol. 20:357-371 (1986); and Hogan, *et al*, Manipulating the Mouse Embryo: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor N.Y. (1986)).

5 The introduction of PRP constructs into host cells can be accomplished using any of a variety of methods such as electroporation, microinjection or calcium phosphate treatment. The preferred method of insertion is electroporation. If the DNA construct has been inserted into a vector, it is preferred that the DNA be linearized prior to transfection. Linearization can be accomplished by digesting the DNA vector with a restriction endonuclease selected to cut 10 outside of the PRP construct sequence.

The screening of transfected cells can be carried out using several different methods. In the cases where an antibiotic resistance gene has been used as a marker, the cells can be cultured in the presence of antibiotic to identify recombinants. In cases where other types of 15 markers are used, Southern hybridizations may be carried out using labeled probes specific for the marker sequence. Finally, if the marker gene encodes an enzyme whose activity can be detected, *e.g.*, beta-galactosidase, enzymatic assays may be performed.

It will usually be desirable not only to identify cells in which recombination has 20 occurred, but also to distinguish specific recombination, *i.e.*, integration at the PRP gene locus, from random insertion events occurring elsewhere in the genome. To identify cells with proper integration, chromosomal DNA can be extracted from cells using standard methods and Southern hybridizations can be performed using probes designed to hybridize specifically to DNA derived from constructs. Alternatively, PCR amplification can be 25 performed using primers that will only act in cells where homologous recombination has occurred at the PRP locus or which will produce a distinctive product of known size.

One way to enrich preparations for recombinants modified at the PRP locus is to incorporate the HSV-thymidine kinase gene into constructs at a position adjacent to the 30 targeting segment. The construct is designed so that the HSV-tk gene is only transferred to the host cell genome when recombination occurs at the PRP gene site. Because the HSV-tk gene makes cells susceptible to the drug gancyclovir, the exposure of recombinants to this

drug will negatively select against cells in which random integration has occurred (see Mansour, *et al.*, *Nature* 336:348 (1988)).

It will be appreciated that homologous recombination will result in the disruption of one PRP allele much more frequently than in the disruption of both alleles. If one desires to produce cells that are completely deficient in the PRP gene, it may therefore be necessary to conduct a second round of homologous recombination on cells that have already been selected as having one allele disrupted. In the second round of transfection, a marker should be used that is different from the marker used in producing the initial recombinants. For example, if a neomycin resistance gene was used to produce cells with one disrupted allele, beta-galactosidase may be used as a marker in the second construct. Screening for cells that have incorporated DNA at the PRP site may be carried out as described above.

E. Making of Transgenic Animals that Develop Dilated Cardiomyopathy

Embryonic stem cells engineered to contain a mutant PRP allele and produced by homologous recombination as described above, may be used to make transgenic animals with a substantial absence of functional PRP protein. These animals are characterized by the progressive development of dilated cardiomyopathy.

The first step in the making of transgenic animals is to produce ES cells modified by homologous recombination to contain a mutant PRP gene allele. This may be accomplished using the procedures described above. The next step is to incorporate the mutant ES cells into an embryo. The preferred method for accomplishing this is by microinjection into an embryo at the blastocyst stage of development. In mice, blastocysts at about 3.5 days of development may be obtained by perfusing the uterus of pregnant animals (Bradley, in: Teratocarcinomas and Embryonic Stem Cells: A Practical Approach, Robertson, ed., IRL Press, Washington, DC (1987)). Preferred blastocysts are male and have genes coding for a coat color or other phenotypic marker that is different from the corresponding marker encoded by the stem cells. In this way, offspring are produced that can be easily screened for the presence of mutant PRP alleles. For example, if the ES cell line carries the gene for a white coat, the embryo selected will, preferably, carry the gene for a black or brown coat and offspring carrying a mutant PRP allele should have mosaic coats.

After the embryonic stem cells have been incorporated into the blastocyst, the chimeric embryo is implanted into the uterus of a pseudopregnant animal. Such animals may be prepared by mating females with vasectomized males of the same species. The pseudopregnant stage of the female is important for successful implantation and, for mice, 5 females about two or three days pseudopregnant should typically be used.

After chimeric embryos have been implanted into pseudopregnant animals, they are allowed to develop to term and offspring are then screened for the presence of a mutant PRP allele. In cases where a phenotype selection strategy has been employed, e.g., based upon 10 coat color as described above, initial screening may be accomplished by simple inspection of animals for mosaic coat color or some other readily apparent phenotypic marker. In addition, or as an alternative, chromosomal DNA may be obtained from the tissue of offspring, e.g., from the tail tissue of mice, and screened for the presence of a modified nucleotide sequence at the PRP gene locus using Southern blots and/or PCR amplification.

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Once offspring have been identified carrying the PRP gene mutation, they can be interbred to produce homozygous animals characterized by an impaired synthesis of functional PRP and the development of cardiomyopathy. Heterozygotes may be identified using Southern blots or PCR amplification as described above. Homozygotes may be 20 identified by Southern blotting equivalent amounts of genomic DNA obtained from the offspring of crossed heterozygotes, from the heterozygotes themselves, and from wild-type animals. Probes should be designed to bind to a portion of the PRP gene sequence present in all animals and the presence of mutant alleles can be determined by the relative position of the bands in autoradiographs. Alternatively, analysis may be performed based upon the 25 relative sizes of PCR amplification products.

Other means for identifying and characterizing transgenic animals are also available. For example, Northern blots can be used to probe mRNA obtained from tissues of offspring animals for the presence or absence of transcripts encoding the PRP gene, the marker gene, or 30 both. In addition, Western blots may be used to assess PRP expression by probing with antibodies specific for the protein. Once heterozygous transgenic animals have been identified, they may be interbred to provide a continual supply of animals that can be used in

studying progressive dilated cardiomyopathy and in evaluating drugs to determine whether they have a beneficial effect in slowing the progression of the disease.

F. Assay Method Based Upon Human PRP

Based upon the concepts set forth above, it may be concluded that individuals with abnormally low levels of PRP or which produce a mutated form of PRP are at increased risk of developing dilated cardiomyopathy. Thus, assays may be performed using cellular "test" samples from an individual to provide diagnostic information. Assays for determining the amount of PRP expressed should be designed to detect either the human PRP protein shown as SEQ ID NO:3 or mRNA coding for this protein. Many methods that are standard in the art may be used for this purpose including radioimmunoassays, immunometric assays and blotting assays which utilize nucleic acid probes that hybridize to PRP transcripts. The results of such an assay performed on a test sample should be compared to those determined using samples derived from individuals known to be normal in the sense that they do not have dilated cardiomyopathy. This "control" population should typically be comprised of a large number of individuals. Standard statistical analyses may be performed to determine whether differences observed between test and control samples are significant.

To test for mutations in the PRP gene, PCR may be performed on test samples, e.g., samples from cheek brushes or the buffy coats from blood. Routine procedures for determining the sequence of a gene may then be used.

What is Claimed is:

1. A substantially purified mouse PRP protein, wherein said protein has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

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2. A process for producing antibody comprising the step of administering the PRP protein of claim 1 to an animal capable of producing said antibody and wherein said PRP protein is administered at a dosage sufficient to induce antibody formation in said animal.

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3. An antibody that binds preferentially to the protein of claim 1.

4. A substantially pure polynucleotide, wherein said polynucleotide consists of a sequence encoding the PRP protein of claim 1.

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5. A vector for recombinantly expressing mouse PRP, comprising a coding region consisting of the polynucleotide of claim 4 operably linked to a promoter.

6. A host cell transformed with the vector of claim 5.

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7. The polynucleotide of claim 4, wherein said polynucleotide has the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

8. A DNA construct suitable for homologous recombination, comprising a targeting segment consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein:

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(a) a portion of the nucleotide sequence of said targeting segment has been interrupted or replaced with a marker nucleotide sequence;

(b) said targeting segment is capable of integrating into the genome of a mouse host cell at the site of the endogenous PRP gene when said construct is introduced into said mouse host cell; and

(c) a mutant allele is produced which is incapable of synthesizing a fully functional PRP gene product when said targeting segment is integrated at the site of said endogenous PRP gene.

9. A method of producing a transgenic mouse having a phenotype characterized by progressive dilated cardiomyopathy, said method comprising:

- (a) making the DNA construct of claim 8;
- (b) introducing said construct into a mouse embryonic stem (ES) cell;
- 5 (c) selecting ES cells which have a mutant PRP allele due to said targeting segment having integrated into genomic DNA at the PRP locus;
- (d) incorporating the ES cells selected in step (c) into a mouse blastocyst to form a chimeric embryo;
- (e) implanting said chimeric embryo into a pseudopregnant mouse;
- 10 (f) allowing said chimeric embryo to develop into viable offspring;
- (g) screening offspring to identify heterozygous mice containing said mutant PRP gene allele; and
- (h) breeding said heterozygous mice to produce homozygous transgenic mice having said phenotype.

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10. The method of claim 9, wherein said marker sequence comprises the neomycin resistance gene.

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11. The method of claim 10, wherein said DNA construct further comprises the HSV-thymidine kinase gene.

12. A mouse having a phenotype characterized by progressive dilated cardiomyopathy, wherein said mouse expresses significantly less wild type PRP than a normal mouse of the same species.

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13. A substantially purified human PRP protein, wherein said protein has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:3.

30
14. A substantially purified polynucleotide, wherein said polynucleotide has a sequence encoding the PRP of claim 13.

15. A vector for recombinantly expressing human PRP, comprising a coding region consisting of the polynucleotide of claim 14 operably linked to a promoter.

16. A host cell transformed with the vector of claim 15.
17. A method of determining the likelihood of a human subject developing dilated cardiomyopathy, comprising:
 - 5 (a) obtaining a sample of cells from said patient;
 - (b) determining the amount of PRP protein or mRNA present in said cells;
 - (c) comparing the amount of PRP determined in step (b) with the amount present in a similar control sample from individuals known to be normal; and
 - 10 (d) concluding that said patient has a higher than normal risk of developing dilated cardiomyopathy if the comparison of step (c) reveals that said patient has an amount of PRP that is significantly lower than said individuals known to be normal.

SEQUENCE LISTING

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<120> p53 Binding Protein-Related Protein in Cardiomyopathy

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(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
3 January 2003 (03.01.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/000843 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **C07K 1/00**, 14/00, 16/00, 17/00, C07H 21/02, 21/04, C12N 15/00, 15/09, 15/63, 15/70, 15/74, 5/00, 5/02, A01K 67/027

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(22) International Filing Date: 14 June 2002 (14.06.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/299,160 20 June 2001 (20.06.2001) US

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(74) Agents: **SANZO, Michael, A.** et al.; Pillsbury Winthrop LLP, 1600 Tysons Boulevard, McLean, VA 22102 (US).

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
27 March 2003

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 03/000843 A3

(54) Title: **P53 BINDING PROTEIN-RELATED PROTEIN IN CARDIOMYOPATHY**

(57) Abstract: The present invention is directed to a mouse model of dilated cardiomyopathy in which animals are deficient in the expression of a gene encoding a p53 binding protein-related protein (PRP). The invention also encompasses the mouse PRP gene and protein themselves as well as counterparts found in the human. The various genes and proteins can be used in making transgenic animals and in assays designed to determine the likelihood of an individual developing cardiomyopathy.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No. PCT/US02/18638

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) :Please See Extra Sheet.

US CL : 530/350, 887.1; 536/28.1; 435/6, 820.1, 825, 800/18, 21, 25

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 530/350, 887.1; 536/28.1; 435/6, 820.1, 825, 800/18, 21, 25

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

WEST, MEDLINE, BIOSIS, EMBASE, SCISEARCH, CAPLUS

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No..
Y	WHITE A.R. et al. Prion protein-deficient neurons reveal lower glutathione reductase activity and increased susceptibility to hydrogen peroxide toxicity. Am. J. Path. 05 November 1999, Vol. 155, pages 1723-1730, see entire document.	1-17

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention.
"A"	document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
"E"	earlier document published on or after the international filing date
"I"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

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